

How does Music affect us?

Allah's name (we) begin with, the Most Affectionate, the Merciful

Music has been around mankind from a long time and in today's world it has become a sensation for many people. Ever wondered? How this thing manages to entice the minds of billions of people, and even causes such long lasting after effects that a person actually becomes an addict.

People committed to creating Music are well aware of the fact that Music just doesn't appear out of nowhere, it takes years of practice to master this skill. Also, to create a melody which actually captivates the mind is not easy, it takes musicians months to produce even one track. Having said this, it is crucial to know what effects does it have on us and how does it affect our mind.

Now, first of all I will present my own theory regarding this and afterwards citation to various other sources will be made.

It must be noted that "Man has an innate greed for power" anything which makes us feel that we are superior to being just one human being is really intriguing for us. It is this longing for power which is embedded in our system; that drives people to do what they see fit to achieve their goal. The Mob Boss thinks that the power to do anything he wants and to remove anyone from his way gives him power, thus he takes the path of darkness. Politicians are ready to

unleash all sorts of havoc to just secure a place in the next elections. People step on the faces of others to just feel they are more powerful. Hence, it cannot be denied that man has a certain lust for power.

Now, how does Music make us feel that power?

First of all, when we hear a certain song or melody we tend to feel that the source of this music is one, the reason for that is we are listening to all those beats and chimes on just one device viz. the outlet for all the beats and chimes is one, it may be your sound system, mobile phone, earphones or anything else. As we feel this, we are unaware of the fact or are simply just ignorant towards it that this whole melody, this symphony is not produced by one individual, it's ranging from five (as in a Band) to almost one hundred and fifty (as in an Orchestra). They are producing beats, chimes, blares and violin sounds at such a speed and with such mastery that it completely baffles the mind. It is also certain that this is not possible for a single individual to achieve this task.

When we listen to such Music, because it is our tendency that whenever we have anything under our control we feel like owning it, just like a downloaded playlist or a picture which we take from the Internet, we believe that its ours somehow. Now such immense Music produced by almost a hundred and fifty people is given into our control, whenever we want we can listen to it, pause it, stop it, if we have an equalizer maybe change its properties, imagine this power of a hundred people given to us and even though we don't have

complete control over it, our mind deludes us into believing that we do. This is how the Music fulfills our lust of power.

Now look at it from another perspective, if we hear one full chime like “Tink!” sound or a beat “dum da dum” our mind swiftly pays attention to it and we are somehow intrigued by this sound, we can call it soft or hard any type of sound. Now, what if these chime and beat are thrown at us a million times in a single sec, more intriguing right? Now imagine a hundred and fifty people producing thousands of chimes and sounds and all this sound is fed to us in a matter of seconds. This is sure to captivate the mind and it feels a sense of novelty if the melody is new and nostalgia if its old. This continuous array of beats impacts nearly every portion of brain and the brain goes on high alert, when the song is over and we have successfully heard every tone and beat, our mind rewards us by releasing dopamine. Dopamine is that hormone which is released in times of pleasure and the same is released when a person takes drugs. This is a way where manually dopamine can be made to secrete; which is actually a kind of drug, and the same patterns can be observed in Music addicts to that of drug addicts. Music is not something man was given in his creation or in his genes, just as Man was not ordered to use drugs, its all man’s innovation which he has created to sooth himself (by releasing dopamine) in every way possible.

Another important thing to note about melodies is that we know that we are also fascinated by contrast, the contrast of colors, patterns, visuals. Like the contrast of fast after slow, high after low, big after small, it intrigues us, we just can’t help it. Using this knowledge

about human nature, the people who create Musical melodies engineer them in such a manner that there is always a constant contrast between tones, pitches and volumes. Remember the above explanation about how the brain is triggered due to thousands of beats in a matter of seconds? How about all those beat are in a synchronized contrasting pattern. A series of low pitch beats with a little thumping of high ones or a middle pitched beat with thumping of high ones like a “Dum da dum da ding ding” or a “dum da da dum da da dum da da dum” or a more familiar pattern of “dum dum da da dum dum da da dum da da dum”. You can see clearly this is so contrasting it almost captivates the brain. Now thousands of contrasting beats coming out all at once in a matter of seconds, imagine the amount of triggering it will do to the brain and the amount of dopamine released.

The next thing is about the pitch and the pace, Musicians tend to emotionally trigger people through a series of calculated pitch and pace variations. If the situation demands a peaceful and harmonious environment; the music will be soft paced, uniform beats, low volumes, usually with sweeter instruments like “flutes and violins”. If the situation is more valorous and bold, like a protagonist saving the world or the victory of good over evil, then the Music according to it will be more pompous, a pitch increasing from low to high, number of instruments involved gradually increasing and more loud and bold ones used like “trumpets, electric guitars etc.” If the situation is grim and horrifying the Music will be sharper with steep turns and low paced sharp beats with high volume punches

instruments like “Piano (higher notes) and Casio” usually serve the purpose. We can easily see how our emotions can be manipulated using calculated beats and right instruments.

Music actually changes the patterns of brain, Daniel J. Levitin in his book “This is your Brain on Music” states that Music involves first our subcortical structures like cochlear nuclei, the brain stem and the cerebellum and then it moves to auditory cortices on both sides of brain.

Another thing which aids in captivating the human mind is the stunning visuals provided with these melodies, if there is perfect synchronization between the two; Be sure to expect something which has effects on the mind no less than drugs. It is as if the key to flood a common person’s body with emotions is in the Musician’s hands. But this is only when the audience tends to allow this control otherwise all this calculation renders useless.

Furthermore, the biggest flaw with Music is that when it is played successively in a loop, it tends to bore the listener out; you can listen to a track once or twice but fifty times continuously? This won’t happen unless you are in need of a visit to the local asylum. Also, when we hear music and it captivates the mind; long after we have stopped listening; it still keeps playing in our mind. This leads to a lesser response of brain to other stimuli and also a reduced focus. People have also been reported to have increased vulnerability to Autism (a kind of disease, for those of you who don’t know).

Therefore, we arrive on the conclusion that a man who really cares for his mental wellbeing and at least the intellectuals should absolutely acknowledge the consequences of such emotional alteration and manipulation. People who care for their brains should avoid these things as they can exhaust the brain very quickly. I'd like to end my conversation here,

April 29, 2020

Fardeen Ahmad Khan Razvi